

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ebrington Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
April 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|
| Almost/nearly all | - | more than 90% |
| Most | - | 75%-90% |
| A majority | - | 50%-74% |
| A significant minority | - | 30%-49% |
| A minority | - | 10%-29% |
| Very few/a small number | - | less than 10% |

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| Outstanding |
| Very good |
| Good |
| Important area(s) for improvement |
| Requires significant improvement |
| Requires urgent improvement |

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

| |
|--|
| The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement. |
| The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement. |
| The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection. |
| The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection. |

Contents

| Section | Page |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Inspection method and evidence base | 1 |
| 2. Focus of inspection | 1 |
| 3. Context | 1 |
| 4. Overall findings of the inspection | 2 |
| 5. Achievements and standards | 2 |
| 6. Provision for learning | 3 |
| 7. Leadership and management | 5 |
| 8. Overall effectiveness | 6 |
| Appendix | |

1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed learning and teaching, scrutinised documentation and the children's written work and held formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Thirty-one percent of parents and 87% of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. Their responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted: their appreciation of the approachable, hard-working and caring staff and principal; the high quality, supportive working relationships between home and school; and, the important role the school plays in the community. The staff responses emphasised the collegial and mutually supportive ethos that exists across the school that results in a motivated staff and happy working environment for all. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the nature of all of the views expressed in the parental and staff confidential questionnaires.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning in the school, including the nursery unit and the speech and language classes; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Ebrington Primary School and Nursery Unit is a controlled school situated in the lower-end of the Waterside area of Londonderry. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the local community. In addition to the mainstream classes and double nursery unit, the school has two integrated speech and language classes. There has been a significant rise in enrolment over the past four years and in the percentage of children requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school has a long history of promoting shared education, initially through the 'Contested Space and Faces and Spaces Project.' The school and nursery unit has developed a close working relationship with a school from the Creggan area of the City through the Shared Education Signature Project.

| Ebrington Primary School and Nursery Unit | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Enrolment | 338 | 359 | 365 | 390 |
| Enrolment in Nursery Unit | 52 | 53 | 53 | 52 |
| Enrolment in Speech and Language Classes | - | - | 9 | 18 |
| % School attendance | 94.4 | 95.3 | 95.7 | N/A |
| % NI Primary school average | 94.9 | 95.6 | 95.4 | N/A |
| FSME Percentage ¹ | 37 | 35 | 39 | 40 |
| % of children on SEN register | 25 | 22 | 27 | 30 |
| No. of children with statements of educational need, including the speech and language classes | 10 | 9 | 11 | 11 |
| No. of newcomer children | * | * | * | * |

Source: data as held by the school

N/A = not available

* fewer than five

4. Overall findings of the inspection

| Overall effectiveness | Capacity to identify and bring about improvement |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Achievements and standards | Very good |
| Provision for learning | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Nursery Unit | Important areas for improvement |
| Speech and Language Classes | Outstanding |

5. Achievements and standards

- Throughout the school, the children are well-behaved and are respectful of the staff, each other and visitors. They listen well in class and clearly enjoy their learning. When given the opportunity, in a majority of the lessons observed, the children work well in pairs and small groups, and contribute to whole-class discussions.
- The school's performance data shows that most of the children, including the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The standards achieved by the children in numeracy are very good. In all key stages, the children enjoy learning mathematics, talk enthusiastically about their work and present their work to a high standard. By year 7, the most able children have a very good knowledge and understanding of most areas of the mathematics curriculum and can carry out mental mathematics calculations with accuracy and speed. They can think flexibly in problem-solving tasks and can apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts, using appropriate mathematical language to explain their reasoning.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

- The children achieve very good standards in literacy. From the foundation stage, they can listen to and respond to stories, take turns in a discussion and re-tell personal experiences and, by year 7, most of the children can justify their own opinions and challenge the opinions of others with confidence. Throughout the school, the children read for enjoyment and information and show very good use of a range of reading strategies; the most able children in year 7 are familiar with a wide range of writers and read with high levels of fluency. As they progress through the school, the children write with increasing independence in a variety of forms and can adapt the form to suit the audience and purpose. Most of the children present their work to a high standard.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning respond very well to the range of interventions in place to support their learning and are included fully in all aspects of the life and work of the school.
- The children in the speech and language classes engage enthusiastically in their learning and work very well together. They demonstrate increasing levels of confidence and are developing effective social and communication skills.
- The children in both nursery classes are very well settled and can work well individually, in pairs and in groups. They spend lengthy periods at self-chosen activities and often engage in purposeful and concentrated play. They are very well behaved and show respect for each other and their environment. Most of the children can talk about their work and experiences and can produce representational work of a high standard. They listen attentively to stories and join in songs and rhymes enthusiastically.
- The children develop their skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) as they progress through the school so that, by year 7, they achieve good standards. They are developing confidence and competence in using appropriately a range of ICT applications to enhance their learning.

6. Provision for learning

- There is a recently developed whole-school approach to planning which guides effectively the teaching across all areas of the curriculum. In the best practice, for example, in the foundation stage, the short-term planning is tailored sufficiently to meet the needs of all the children within the class and the teachers' regular evaluations of the planning guide well the next steps in learning and teaching. This best practice should be disseminated more widely across the school to encourage the teachers to focus more clearly their evaluations on the extent to which learning has been successful and to use more consistently the evaluations to inform and improve future planning.
- The teachers know the children well and have established very good working relationships in all of the classes. In the very effective practice, in almost half of the lessons observed, the teachers: build on the previous learning; employ a range of stimulating resources and active learning approaches to engage and motivate the children; and, use effective questioning to elicit extended responses from the children and to consolidate their understanding. In the less effective practice, there are insufficient opportunities for the children to develop their oral presentation skills and their thinking skills and personal capabilities, through for example, assuming specific roles and responsibilities during group tasks. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and positively. However, there is a

variation in the quality of the marking to promote improvement. The teachers need to indicate more clearly to the children how to improve their work, and ensure that the children are given opportunities to make improvements and corrections in order to raise further the standards they attain.

- The provision for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is very good. The children are identified at an early stage using a range of diagnostic tests and teacher observations. The children receive effective support in class and in the well-planned, highly effective withdrawal sessions. The individual education plans are well-focused on the children's learning needs and the reviews guide effectively future planning. A key strength of the provision is the thorough and rigorous tracking of the children's progress undertaken by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The classroom assistants make a very good contribution to the children's learning.
- The planning for literacy guides well the children's progression and development of skills in reading, writing, talking and listening. The teachers' use of the structured six-step approach to writing ensures that the children develop well their skills and their understanding of the writing process. The topic-based activities provide meaningful contexts for the children to write in a range of forms; however, there is a need to develop further the opportunities for extended creative and independent writing across other curricular areas. The school has a very effective reading programme that is used to extend the children's skills and enjoyment of reading. A notable strength of the provision for reading is the wide variety of appropriate intervention programmes to support further the children's progress in reading, including "Time to Read" with volunteers from local businesses and peer-reading sessions.
- The long-term planning for numeracy outlines clearly progression in knowledge and skills across each year group and provides appropriate guidance for the teachers. In the most effective numeracy provision, in one-half of lessons observed, the work was differentiated appropriately with suitably structured, active learning activities and engaging introductions to lessons which consolidated mental mathematics skills. The staff need to disseminate this practice across the school to ensure consistency in the learning experiences for all of the children. A key feature of the provision for numeracy is the portfolio of problem-solving tasks and investigative activities which extend the children's thinking and enable them to make connections between their mathematical learning and everyday life. In addition, the numeracy provision includes a wide range of effective interventions and support strategies that are in place for those children who have been identified as requiring support with their learning in numeracy.
- There is a friendly, caring atmosphere in the nursery unit and the working relationships between the staff and the children are very good. The staff need to review their current method of planning to outline more clearly the learning inherent in the activities in order to guide them more effectively in their work with the children and to ensure that all available time is used to promote the children's language and learning. Currently, the staff use an excessive range of methods to observe and track the children in their activities; these methods need to be reviewed and refined in order to allow the staff to spend more time engaging with the children.

- The quality of the provision for the children in the speech and language classes is outstanding. The children enjoy the well-organised, calm and nurturing environment. The teachers and classroom assistants know the children well and work effectively together to provide a consistent approach to the work in both classes. They plan effectively to provide stimulating and challenging lessons. The staff set appropriate individual targets for each child and work closely with the speech therapists to plan and implement a range of effective strategies to develop the children's language skills and build their confidence. They monitor closely the progress of every child and liaise very effectively with parents and the mainstream schools to ensure they are well informed and can continue with strategies to support their children. The children enjoy the regular opportunities to integrate with their peers so that, by the end of their time in the speech and language classes, they reintegrate successfully to mainstream classes.
- The quality of pastoral care in the school and nursery unit is good and is characterised by mutual respect and supportive working relationships at all levels. There is a collegial and caring ethos throughout the school and a great sense of pride and belief in the concept of 'Team Ebrington'. There is a range of stimulating extra-curricular activities available for the children to choose from, including the very successful school choir. The children would benefit from having more opportunities to take on roles of responsibility and make meaningful contributions to decision-making within the school.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management are highly committed to the well-being of the children and the staff and to the ongoing improvement of the provision within the school. There is a comprehensive school development plan² which has been informed by extensive and meaningful consultation with all key stakeholders. The associated action plans need to be more focused on the learning experiences of all the children and their attainment, in order to guide better the process of monitoring and evaluation at all levels.
- The school maintains effective links with the parents, a range of external agencies, the local community and with other schools in order to provide a range of meaningful and beneficial educational and pastoral experiences for the children. The parents are actively encouraged and supported by the school to become involved in their children's education and are kept informed about the life and work of the school through a range of means, including the well-maintained school website, regular newsletters and informative home learning sheets.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. There is an aspect of governance to review, namely, to ensure more rigour in the process of monitoring and evaluation across the school.

² The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following area needs to be addressed:
 - the board of governors, principal and staff need to ensure the completion of written risk assessments for all educational outings.

In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 reported that they are happy and secure in school and know who to contact and what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Ebrington Primary School and Nursery Unit demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement. In particular there is a need for:

- the senior leadership, governors and co-ordinators to use more effectively the action planning process to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements across the school and nursery unit.

Health and Safety / Accommodation

1. The board of governors and leadership team need to ensure appropriate risk assessments and procedures are in place to ensure all points of access to the school are secure at all times.

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